

Legislative Bulletin  
HB 667  
February 2007

**What the bill will do:** *HB667 establishes a fund of \$2 million, from which the interest (approximately \$100,000 per year) payments will be used to help fund permanent Lewis and Clark site attractions through a grants program requiring a dollar-for-dollar match from grantees.*

**Background:** Montana's three major Lewis and Clark site attractions have been built within the past 10 years. These sites include Pompey's Pillar near Billings, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center in Great Falls, and Traveler's Rest, just outside Missoula. All three are government owned, with supporting non-profit organizations. All three are struggling to maintain operations and programming. HB 667 would provide a source of revenue to help sustain these three organizations, yet require that they also contribute by matching any grants dollar-for-dollar.

**Why Funding for Montana's Lewis and Clark Sites is reaching crisis proportions...**

Vanishing sources of revenue have led to significant cutbacks at all three organizations, threatening the operations and future of each. Together, these organizations serve approximately 170,000 tourists and visitors each year.

***Major funding sources that have supported each site have dried up:***

- The National Park Service Challenge Cost Share program is being eliminated in FY 2007. This program at one time made available up to \$5 million in grants each year for specific Lewis and Clark programs and attractions. Montana sites and projects have traditionally received a large portion of these funds.
- Montana's State Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission and related funding ended in 2006.
- The USDA Forest Service funding for the Bicentennial has been eliminated and the availability of appropriated funds drastically reduced.

***Factors that affect and limit funding available for Montana's Lewis and Clark sites:***

- All three sites are new and in their infancy, having been established only in the past 10 years, during the height of the Bicentennial. All three need stable sources of funding beyond the Bicentennial.
- All three focus solely on the re-telling of the stories of the Lewis and Clark expedition and the Corps' interactions with Montana Indian tribes.
- Because their missions are focused solely on Lewis and Clark, funding sources for all three organizations/sites are limited. These organizations need a fund earmarked specifically to perpetuate this piece of Montana's early history.

Together, these three entities attract approximately 170,000 visitors per year, mostly tourists. They are the focal point for Lewis and Clark interest in the state, serve as a main tourism draw as "anchor attractions" for Lewis and Clark in Montana, and lead visitors to other smaller sites and attractions.

All three sites have private, non-profit organizations, which have been instrumental in their founding and ongoing operations. These include Pompey's Pillar Historical Association, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation, and Travelers Rest Preservation and Heritage Association.

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## **Budget Cuts / Fiscal Impact**

### **Traveler's Rest State Park** (Located 8 miles south of Missoula near Lolo)

*Supporting Non-Profit: Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association*

*Approximate annual attendance: 50,000 visitors each year.*

- Site is owned by the State of Montana and designated a State Park; State contributes NO money for ongoing maintenance and operations.
- As part of the Montana State Parks Fee to Free Program, Montana residents are admitted free to Travelers' Rest, thereby eliminating a supporting revenue source.
- Association funds all aspects of Travelers Rest, from interpretive programming to utility bills, despite the fact it is a National Historic Landmark owned by the State of Montana.
- Is a valuable resource in providing curriculum information and assistance for teachers as they strive to meet the Indian Education for All requirement of the Montana Constitution.

#### ***Budget/Fiscal Impact to date:***

- Possibility of reduced hours
- Increased user fees for schools
- Staff cutbacks
- Program reductions

### **Pompey's Pillar** (Located 25 miles east of Billings)

*Supporting Non-Profit: Pompey's Pillar Historical Association*

*Approximate annual attendance: 50,000 visitors each year.*

- Pompey's Pillar Historical Association (PPHA) operates under a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), where BLM pays operating costs and PPHA is responsible for all facilities construction costs, improvements, and educational programs.
- The Association had been operating from a small 250 square foot visitors' center for several years; a new 5,700 square foot facility opened in 2006.
- On the face of the 150-foot butte Captain William Clark carved his name and date on July 25, 1806, during his return trip. The signature and date still appear on Pompey's Pillar, as they did 200 years ago.

#### ***Budget/Fiscal Impact to date:***

- Clark Days event funding in jeopardy
- Season is limited to only 4 months of the year due to funding restraints
- School education program limited due to lack of funding.
- No programming/resource room due to lack of funding

### **Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center** (Located in Great Falls)

*Supporting Non-Profit: Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation*

*Approximate average annual attendance: 70,000 visitors each year.*

- Facility owned by USDA Forest Service. Foundation finances capital improvements and some programming.
- Built in 1998 with funds raised by the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center Foundation.
- A 25,000 square foot facility regarded as one of the best along the trail
- Home to the national Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, an organization with an outstanding research library that attracts scholars from throughout the country.
- The Interpretive Center is located in the area where Lewis and Clark spent a month portaging around the Great Falls of the Missouri River.

#### ***Budget/Fiscal Impact to date:***

- Staff reduced from 21 in FY 2003 to 10 in FY 2007 (includes all seasonal and part-time staff)
- Budget reduced from \$873,000 in FY 2003 to \$575,000 in FY 2006. Budget advice (USDA Forest Service proposed) in FY 2007 is \$410,000.
- Many educational programs eliminated, and staff training and maintenance programs axed.